

Remarks:

These remarks are responsive to the Office action dated April 2, 2010. Prior to entry of this response, claims 17-49 were pending in the application. By way of this response, claims 17, 25, 33, 38, 43, and 49 are amended. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims.

Examiner Interview

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended during the July 8, 2010 interview. In the interview, Applicants' representative, the Examiner, and the Examiner's supervisor discussed European Patent No. 1,030,144 (Gomoll et al., hereinafter Gomoll) and U.S. Patent No. 4,558,503 (Wilson).

With regard to Gomoll, the Examiner explained that Gomoll was being interpreted to show the "element to be mounted" of claim 17 via mounting element (33). From this Applicants' representative pointed out that mounting element (33), which is inserted into a receiving contour (15), includes a contractible pin (central mounting means (18)) including four portions, each portion having a flange (FIG. 4 of Gomoll included below for reference). Further, Applicants' representative pointed out that according to FIG. 3 of Gomoll (also included below for reference), central mounting means (18) appears to be designed such that the mounting element (33) is releasably mounted in any of the various recesses (See FIG. 2 of Gomoll), and it is therefore probable that it is added after the insulating layer (12) has been formed. In any case, the Examiner agreed at least that Gomoll is silent as to the foaming of the insulation layer.

Fig. 4

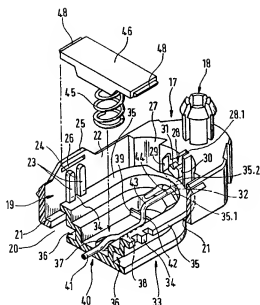
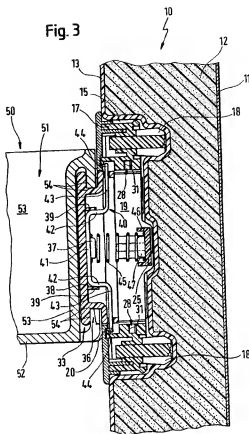
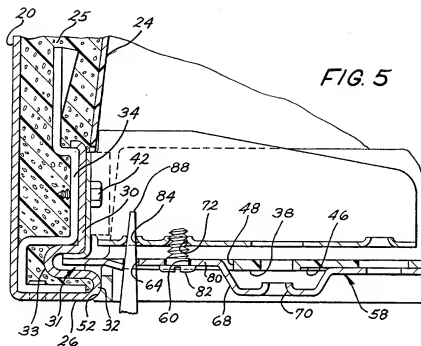


Fig. 3



Applicants' representative then explained the significance in the present application that the foaming is performed after the element to be mounted is inserted, in that it enhances the structure of the system while maintaining the seal of the liner. Applicants' representative then turned to Wilson to explain that Wilson does not cure the deficiencies of Gomoll. Specifically, Applicants' representative explained that the foaming operation of Wilson does not describe a foaming operation to enhance the structural integrity by using an externally mounted element. Instead, Wilson describes providing structural integrity to an internal back up plate (34) located within the refrigerator wall (col. 3 lines 43-46). Further, Applicants' representative explained that the approach of Wilson uses screw mounts for mounting of side walls and/or door hinges that are precisely the type of connection the present application aims to avoid. FIG. 5 of Wilson is included below for reference.



The Examiners acknowledged these distinctions and requested that Applicants make the claim more clear that the element to be mounted is retained within the recess, rather than being removable as in Gomoll. Applicants have amended the claims as requested by the Examiners, discussed in detail below.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 17-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gomoll and in further view of Wilson.

Applicants traverse the rejection of claims 17-49 as being unpatentable over Gomoll in view of Wilson. Nevertheless, as discussed above in the summary of the interview, to further prosecution of the application, Applicants amend claim 17 to recite:

A method of producing a mounting arrangement for mounting elements on a plastic inner lining of a thermally foam-insulated wall of a refrigerator and/or freezer, comprising the following steps:

fabricating the plastic inner lining of plastic material with a receiving contour which is shaped such that on at least three sides it at least partly corresponds to an outer contour of an element to be mounted, so that the element to be mounted can be received by the receiving contour without any accessories for mounting,

inserting the element to be mounted into the receiving contour, and

foaming a thermal foam insulation on a back of the plastic inner lining after the inserting of the element to be mounted, such that a portion of the element to be mounted remains fixed in the receiving contour and such that the receiving contour in the plastic inner lining is supported and strengthened.

One example of such a method is described on pages 2-4 of the subject application. Examples of the resulting mounting arrangement for mounting elements on a plastic inner liner supported by foam insulation are shown in FIGS. 1 and 2. Claim 17 has been amended to clarify that the element to be mounted is inserted into the receiving contour prior to foaming, while the plastic liner is flexible, and after foaming the plastic liner is strengthened and supported by the hardened foam such that the element remains fixed in the receiving contour. This method has the advantage that during the manufacturing process, the element to be mounted may already be inserted into the manufacturing tool and the outer contour of the element to be mounted may be directly reproduced in the inner lining. This ensures that the element to be mounted has an intimate connection with the receiving contour. After foaming, the element remains fixed and cannot slide back and forth in the receiving contour. This method may have the additional advantage of decreased duration and number of steps in the manufacturing process.

Applicants respectfully submit that the method of claim 17 differs from the method of Gomoll in view of Wilson, as discussed above.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the amended claim 17 is in condition for allowance. Claims 18-24 depend from claim 17. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the rejection to claims 17-24 be withdrawn for at least these reasons. Further, other independent claims 25, 33, 38, 43, and 49 have been amended to include the features of the amended claim 17. Thus, the same reasoning applies. Claims 26-32, 34-37, 39-42, and 44-48 depend from claims 25, 33, 38, and 43, respectively. Thus, Applicants submit that claims 25-49 are in a condition for allowance and respectfully request the rejection to claims 25-49 be withdrawn for at least these reasons.


Conclusion

Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Please charge any cost incurred in the filing of this response, along with any other costs, to Deposit Account No. 503397.

Respectfully submitted,

ALLEMAN HALL MCCOY RUSSELL &
TUTTLE LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops, is written over a horizontal line.

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